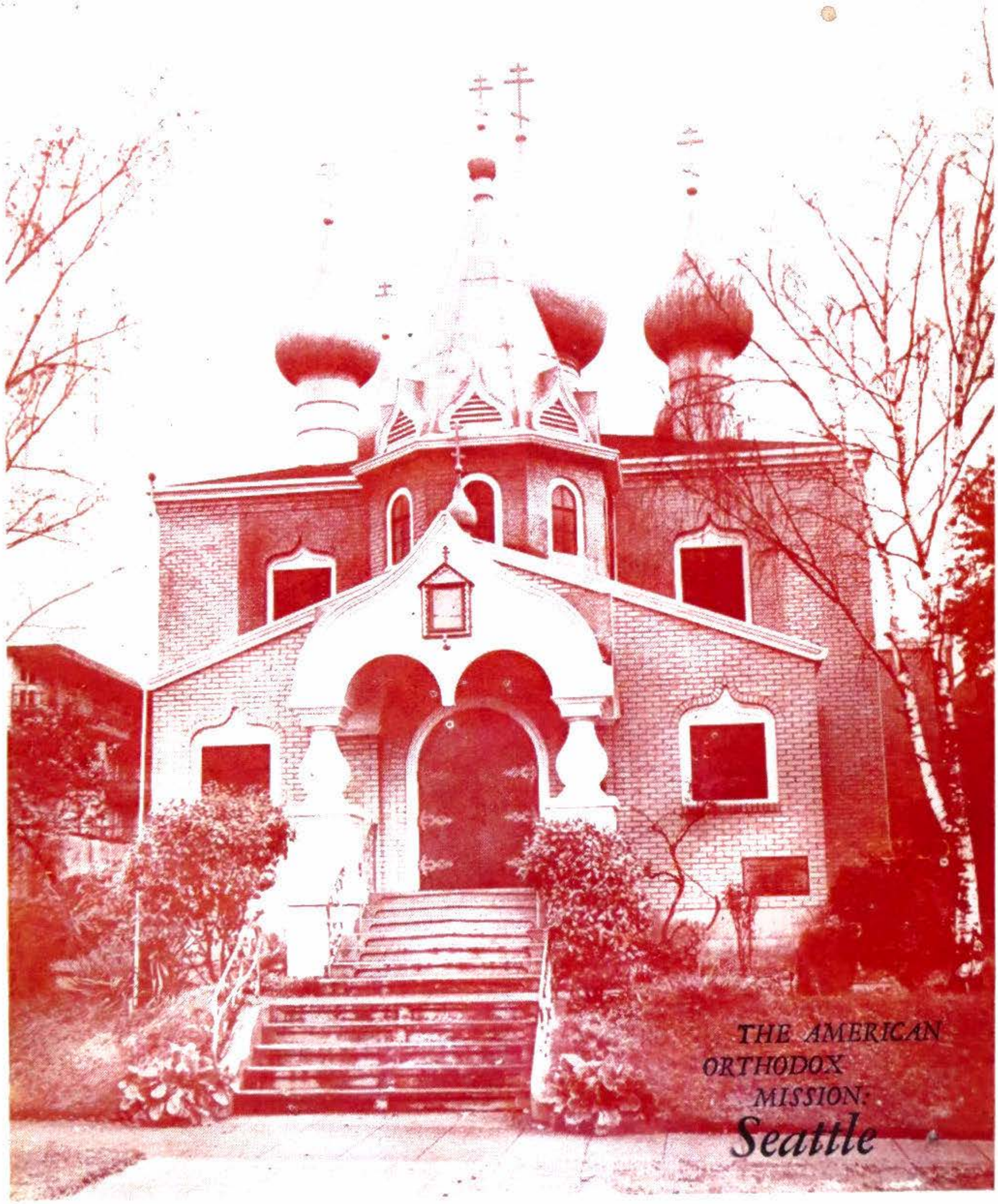
THE ORTHODOX WORD

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER, 1969 SEVENTY - FIVE CENTS



THE AMERICAN ORTHODOX MISSION:

Seattle

THE ORTHODOX WORD

A BIMONTHLY PERIODICAL

1969 Vol. 5, No. 5 (28)

September - October

Established with the blessing of His Eminence the late *John (Maximovitch)*, Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

Editors: *Eugene Rose*, M.A., & *Gleb Podmoshensky*, B.Th.

Printed by the Father Herman of Alaska Brotherhood.

Text set in 10-point Garamont type, titles in 18-point Goudy Bold.

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COVER: St. Nicholas Cathedral in Seattle; courtesy of *The Seattle Times* (see article on p. 183). Photographs on p. 188, courtesy of Sergei Kalfov.

Copyright 1969 by Orthodox Christian Books & Icons.

Published bimonthly by Orthodox Christian Books & Icons. Second-class postage paid at Redding, California.

Yearly subscription $4.00, two years $7.00; individual copies 75 cents.

All inquiries should be directed to:

THE ORTHODOX WORD, PLATINA, CALIFORNIA 96076

THE CANONIZATION OF THE SAINTS OF GOD

HOLINESS IS NOT simply righteousness, for which the righteous merit the enjoyment of blessedness in the Kingdom of God, but rather such a height of righteousness that men are filled with the Grace of God to such an extent that it flows from them upon those who associate with them. Great is their blessedness, which proceeds from personal experience of the Glory of God. Being filled also with love for men, which proceeds from love of God, they are responsive to men's needs, and upon their supplication they appear also as intercessors and defenders for them before God.

At the time of the high spiritual fervor in the first centuries of persecutions against Christians, such were also the martyrs. The martyr's death itself became a door to the higher Mansions, and Christians at once began to invoke them as holy men pleasing to God. Miracles and signs confirmed this faith of the Christians and were a proof of their sanctity.

Likewise, the great ascetics subsequently began to be revered. No one decreed the veneration as saints of Anthony the Great, Macarius the Great, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Nicholas the Wonderworker, and many others like them, but East and West equally revere them; their sanctity can be denied only by those who do not believe in sanctity.

The choir of saints pleasing to God grew unceasingly; in every place where there were Christians there appeared also its own new ascetics. However, the general life of Christians began to decline; spiritual

(*Continued on page 200*)

+ Archbishop John Maximovitch

Archbishop John Maximovitch
San Francisco, December, 1964

THE 'UMILENIYE' ICON OF NOVGOROD

Commemorated on July 8

The following account, translated from the standard pre-Revolutionary book by E. Poselyanin on the Icons of the Mother of God, is the 16th in a continuing series of the historical Weeping Icons of the Mother of God.

IN NOVGOROD, in the church of the Holy Trinity in the neighborhood of Zemsk, is to be found the grace-giving Icon of the Mother of God which is known by the name of *Umileniye* ('Tender Feeling'). In the year 1337 the Icon became noted for this miracle:

At noon on the 8th of July, the church caretaker heard a noise in the church and hastened to enter the church. In terror he saw that the Icon of the Mother of God that was above the northern door of the

THE WEEPING ICON
'UMILENIYE' OF NOVGOROD

iconostasis in the second tier of icons had been lifted from its place by an unseen power and stood in the air, not supported by anything, and tears flowed from the eyes of the Mother of God. "O great wonder," writes the chronicler, "how from dry wood there can be tears, but by this it is to be known that God glorifies His Mother and accepts Her prayer and will save the city."

Immediately Archbishop Alexy was informed, and he at once came to the place of the miracle accompanied by the whole clergy, a church procession, and a multitude of people. The Icon was placed by the Archbishop in a specially built shrine, and at the same time in memory of this miracle it was decreed that the feast of the *Umileniye* Icon be on July 8.

Later the same year, according to the church chronicle, a plague broke out in Novgorod. The people turned in prayer to the Queen of Heaven before Her wonderworking Icon, and the plague ceased. In gratitude for the miraculous protection of the Mother of God, Archbishop Basil, in 1352, decreed that every year there should be a church procession from the Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom to the Holy Trinity Church.

His successor Alexy was witness of a new miracle from the *Umileniye* Icon. In the summer of 1366, the Holy Trinity Church burned, and flames embraced the whole church, but the wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God was manifested standing in the air above the blazing church. The whole people saw this miracle, and Archbishop Alexy came to the church with a procession; during the prayer service the Icon descended from above into the hands of the Archbishop and the fire ceased, and as a kind of verification for posterity the back side of the wood was burned to the length of seven inches.

The Grand Prince John III took this Icon in 1497 to Moscow, where it was until 1508, when it was returned to the Holy Trinity church in Novgorod, due to the intercession of the Princess Maria, to whom the Mother of God appeared in a dream and ordered that the wonderworking Icon be returned.

Icon by Photios Kontoglou

SAINT GREGORY THE SINAITE

Reposed 1346 *Commemorated August 8th*

TROPARION, TONE 5

Dismissal Hymn: Plagal of First Tone

ADORNED WITH SANCTITY OF SOUL, as a pure vessel of divine vision, thou didst prove to be a reflection of the angelic life. Wherefore, thou dost shine forth spiritually with the radiance of the virtues, O our father Gregory, thou boast of Sinai and Athos; and thou dost guide us unerringly unto the salvation of our souls.

The Life of
ST. GREGORY THE SINAITE

THE DIVINE GREGORY was born in Asia Minor in a small place called Kukula. It lay near Clazomen (by Smyrna). His parents were rich and, what is most essential, virtuous. He was given a good education in pagan philosophy and especially in the truths of sacred Scripture. This was in the reign of the elder Andronicus Paleologus. The Turks were then overrunning Asia Minor and plundering the villages. Among others they seized St. Gregory's village, which was Christian, and together with his parents and relatives he was led away into captivity to Laodicea, where by the mercy of God they were given the permission by the barbarians to visit the Church of the Laodicean Christians. The Laodiceans were touched by the unfortunate plight of their brothers. In order to lighten their heavy yoke they begged the Turks to give the captives their freedom and they offered them money as a ransom. The infidels were won over by the silver and the captive Christians received their freedom and the right to go wherever they liked. Then the divine Gregory went to Cyprus. In a short time he had attracted the attention of the people of Cyprus, and by his natural and acquired, interior and exterior perfections he made almost all love and respect him. For he was by nature goodlooking, and his interior beauty surpassed his exterior.

God, Who knows those who are His (II Tim. 2: 19) and Who assists them in all good, arranged for the divine Gregory to settle on the Island of Cyprus with one virtuous monk living in silence. After a short time this monk clothed him in the initial angelic Schema. Under his direction St. Gregory soon became an expert in the monastic life. From

here St. Gregory went to Mount Sinai in search of greater labors. There he received the great angelic Schema. In a short time he surprised and astonished the ascetics there by his almost bodiless, angelic life. His fasting, vigils, all-night standings, constant psalm-singing and prayer were beyond description. It seemed as if he were quarrelling with nature, wishing to make his material body immaterial, so that, amazed at his struggles, the ascetics there usually called him the bodiless one. But I am at a loss to know how to write about the root of all virtues, his obedience and profound humility, lest it should seem to the easy-going that I am telling a lie, writes the compiler of St. Gregory's life (Callistus, Patriarch of Constantinople). But as it would be a sin against the truth itself to remain silent about it, I must relate what I heard from his most devoted and sincere disciple Gerasimus. According to the words of this blessed Gerasimus, the divine Gregory carried out every service appointed to him by the superior without the least delay and with all zeal, always imagining to himself that God was watching his work. At the same time, in spite of all his obediences he never omitted his usual prayers. This was his ordinary practice. After receiving the superior's blessing in the evening, he went to his cell and shut the door, and there his kneelings, psalmody, raising of his hands to God and aspiration of his whole mind to Him continued until the wood sounded for Orthros. With the first stroke of the wood he was the first at the door of the church. Having come to church he never went out until the service had finished; he was the first to enter the church and always the last to leave it. His food consisted of a small quantity of bread and water, just enough to keep him alive. The duty of cook was assigned to him. For more than three years he toiled in this heavy obedience. Who can worthily praise his extraordinary humility here? He always thought that he was serving not men but angels, and the place of his service he honored as the sanctuary of God and an altar. It is necessary to say here that the Saint was extremely skilled also in calligraphy. With all his bodily occupations he never gave up his spiritual studies. In the reading of Holy Scripture and other pious books he probably spent as much time as any of the fathers there. He surpassed almost all of them in knowledge. In addition to his studies he had the pious custom of climbing up to the top of Sinai almost every day in order to make reverent prayer on the site of those ancient great and glorious miracles.

Could the hater of good regard St. Gregory with indifference at the sight of such labors? In order to hinder the Saint on his way to perfection, he succeeded in sowing tares of trouble among Gregory's fellow-

ascetics and in arousing in them the passion of envy. As a disciple of the meek and humble Jesus, as soon as Gregory noticed this criminal passion in them he secretly left the monastery, taking with him the worthy Gerasimus. Gerasimus was a native of the Island of Euripus, a relative of the ruling prince of that Island; but, despising the world with all its vain glitter and glory, he went to Mount Sinai. Here he came to know the divine Gregory, and, astounded by his extraordinary struggles, attached himself to him and became one of his disciples. With the help of God he also rose to the highest degree of activity (*praxis*) and divine vision (*theoria*), so that after the great Gregory he became for many a model of the ascetic life.

AND SO THEY LEFT SINAI and came to Jerusalem to venerate the lifegiving Sepulchre. After visiting all the holy places and reverently venerating them, they sailed to Crete and landed at a place called Fair Havens.[1] Not wishing to spend time uselessly, the Saint went in search of some silent place fully suitable for the solitary life. After no little difficulty, they found some caves after their desire, and there they gladly settled. Here St. Gregory began to continue his struggles with redoubled energy so that in a special sense the words of the Prophet-King were justified: *My knees are weak through fasting, and my flesh is changed for want of oil* (Psalm 108: 24). Actually from immoderate abstinence his face became sallow, and his limbs withered and were hardly able to move. But this blessed toiler in God had a flaming desire to find some spiritual man who could guide him to what he had not yet attained on the way to spiritual perfection. Soon the Lord regarded the holy desire of his faithful servant and arranged the matter in His wise way. Through a special revelation the divine Gregory was informed of a certain solitary practicing silence in that country who was an expert in activity and spiritual vision. He was called Arsenius. Moved by the Spirit of God, Arsenius himself came to St. Gregory's cell. St. Gregory joyfully received his guest. After the customary prayer and reading, this mind-reading elder carried on a conversation as if from some divine book on the guarding of the mind, on sobriety and attention, on mental prayer, on the purification of the mind by means of keeping the commandments and the possibility of making it able to see the light and on much else besides. After this address he asked St. Gregory:

"And you, child, what kind of activity do you practice?"

Then the divine Gregory told him everything about himself almost

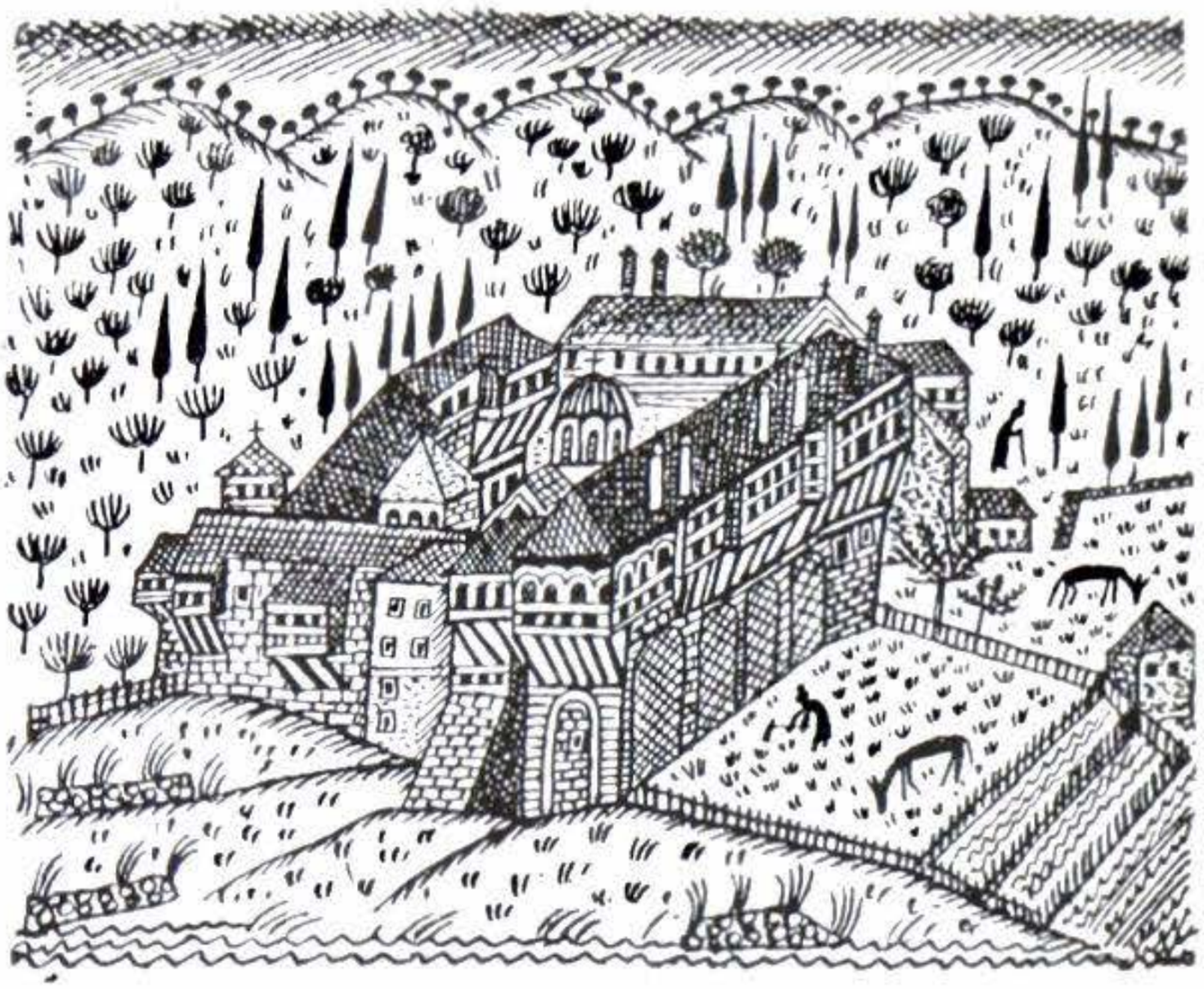
1. St. Paul spent a winter there (Acts 27: 8ff).

from the day of his birth. Arsenius, who already knew very well the way which leads a man to the height of virtue, said to him:

"All this, child, that you have told me about, is called by the God-bearing Fathers *activity*, and not *vision* (*theoria*)."

When he heard this, the blessed Gregory at once fell at his feet and fervently asked him, conjuring him even by the name of God, to teach him mental activity and to explain spiritual vision to him. Not wishing to hide the talent given to him by God to no purpose, the divine Arsenius willingly agreed to comply with the Saint's request, and in a short time he had taught him everything that he himself had richly received from Divine Grace. Moreover, he revealed to Gregory how various and countless are the snares of the enemy of our salvation -- that is, he told him of what happens to those who practice the struggles of virtue by reason of the man-haters, the demons, and from envious men whom the evil one uses as the tools of his malice. Having received these priceless lessons from the divine Arsenius, St. Gregory went to holy Mt. Athos. Wishing to see all the fathers of the Holy Mountain, to pay his respects to them and to obtain their holy prayers and blessing, he went round all the monasteries, hermitages, cells, and also the deserts and impassable places. Among the fathers of the Holy Mountain he saw many ascetics who were extremely adorned with merely active virtues. And when he asked them whether they practiced mental prayer, sobriety, and the guarding of the mind, they said that they did not even know what mental prayer was, or the custody of the mind and sobriety.

HAVING GONE ROUND all the Holy Mountain, he came to the hermitage of Magula, which lies near the Monastery of Philotheus, and there he found three monks, Esaias, Cornelius and Macarius, who were occupied not only with activity but with divine vision also. Here he built a cell for himself and others for his disciples. He placed his own cell at a sufficient distance from the cells of his disciples so as to be able to immerse himself wholly in God alone through mental prayer and be constantly occupied with Him, *i.e.*, so as to engage in *theoria* without hindrance according to the lessons of his divine director Arsenius. And so gathering all his senses within himself, uniting his mind with his spirit and nailing it to the cross of Christ, he frequently repeated: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner! He prayed with tenderness and contrition of heart and with sighs from the depth of his soul, watering the ground with warm tears which flowed like a river from his eyes. And God did not despise his prayer: *A contrite*



The Monastery of Philotheus.
Drawing by Photios Kontoglou

The Magula Hermitage, as photographed at the turn of this century

and humble heart God will not despise (Psalm 50: 19), but He very soon heard him, for *the righteous call and the Lord heareth them* (Psalm 33: 18).

Therefore, having raised his soul and heart to white heat and having been changed by a gracious and glorious change through the action of the Holy Spirit and having been illumined by Divine Grace, he saw that his house was full of light. Filled with joy and unutterable happiness and again shedding fountains of tears, he was consumed by divine love. In him that saying of the Fathers was fulfilled indeed: "Activity is ascent to divine vision" (*praxis theorias epivasis*). And because the Saint had risen above the flesh and this world, he was wholly filled with divine love, and from that time that light never ceased to sanctify the Righteous man according to the word: *the light is always for the righteous* (Proverbs 13: 9). For in answer to my question and that of my fellow disciples regarding spiritual vision, says the compiler of the life of St. Gregory, that glorious father replied that he who is raised to God sees by the grace of the Holy Spirit as if in a mirror the whole creation shining, whether in the body or out of the body he does not know, as says the divine Paul, until some hindrance to him during the vision makes him come to himself.

Seeing him coming out of his cell with a joyful face, I asked him in simplicity of heart about the cause of such a manifestation. And that ever memorable man, like a loving father, replied to me thus:

"The soul that is attached to God and consumed with love for Him rises above the creation and lives above visible things, and being completely filled with desire for God, cannot be hidden. As the Lord promised it, saying: *Thy Father Who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly* (Matt. 6: 6), and again: *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven* (Matt. 5: 16). For then the heart leaps and dances for joy and the mind is all in a pleasant agitation and the face is happy and joyous, according to the words of the wise man: *A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance* (Prov. 15: 13).

I again said to him: "Most divine father! For the love of the truth explain to me what the soul is and how it is contemplated by the saints?"

With great quietness, according to his custom, in answer to my question he kindly replied: "My beloved spiritual child: *Seek not things that are too high for thee, and search not out things that are too deep for thee* (Sirach 3: 21). Because being still a child, that is, not perfect, you cannot digest very strong food, that is, you cannot understand subjects that

are beyond your powers, just as the food of a mature man is not good for tender infants who need milk."

Falling at his feet and firmly grasping them, I asked him with great earnestness to explain this important subject to me. He consented and said to me briefly: "Unless anyone has seen the resurrection of his soul, he cannot know exactly what the spiritual (noetic) soul is."

But addressing him with due reverence I again asked him: "Tell me, father, have you attained to the measure of this resurrection, that is, have you learned what a spiritual soul is?"

"Yes," he replied with great humility.

"For the sake of the love of God, teach me this too," I humbly asked him. "This can be of great benefit to my soul."

Then that divine soul, praising my zeal, told me the following: "The soul when it uses all its zeal and struggles by means of the active virtues with due discretion, having laid low all the passions, subjects them to itself. And when it subjugates the passions, then the natural virtues surround it and follow it as a shadow follows the body, and they not only follow it but they teach it and instruct it in what is above nature, as if mounting by a spiritual ladder. And when the mind by the grace of Christ rises to what is above nature, it is enlightened by the shining of the Holy Spirit and stretches out to clear vision. Having become above itself, according to the measure of grace given it by God, it sees extremely clearly and purely the essence of things, not at all as outwardly-wise men philosophize about it, who only grasp at the shadow of things and do not try, as is proper, to get behind the essential action of nature. For, as the divine Scripture says, their foolish heart has been darkened, and *professing themselves to be wise they became fools* (Romans 1:21-22). Afterwards, having received training and the grace of the Holy Spirit, the soul gradually leaves the former things on account of the multitude of visions which it sees, and passes to the highest and most divine things, as the Apostle Paul says: *forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before* (Phil. 3:13). Then, purified in this manner, the soul truly casts away all fear and terror, and being attached by love to the Bridegroom Christ, she sees that her natural thoughts stop completely and remain behind her, according to the writing of the Holy Fathers. Having attained to the formless and unutterable beauty, she converses only with the one God and is illumined by the bright radiance and grace of the Holy Spirit. Thus when she is enlightened by this infinite light, she has affection only for God, and on

account of this wonderful and new change she no longer feels this lowly, earthly and material body at all. For she is pure and bright without any admixture of material passion, and her nature, especially her mental nature, is as it was before the transgression of our first parent Adam. Adam was at first covered with the grace of this infinite light, but afterwards on account of the bitter transgression he was stripped of this luminous glory and radiance."

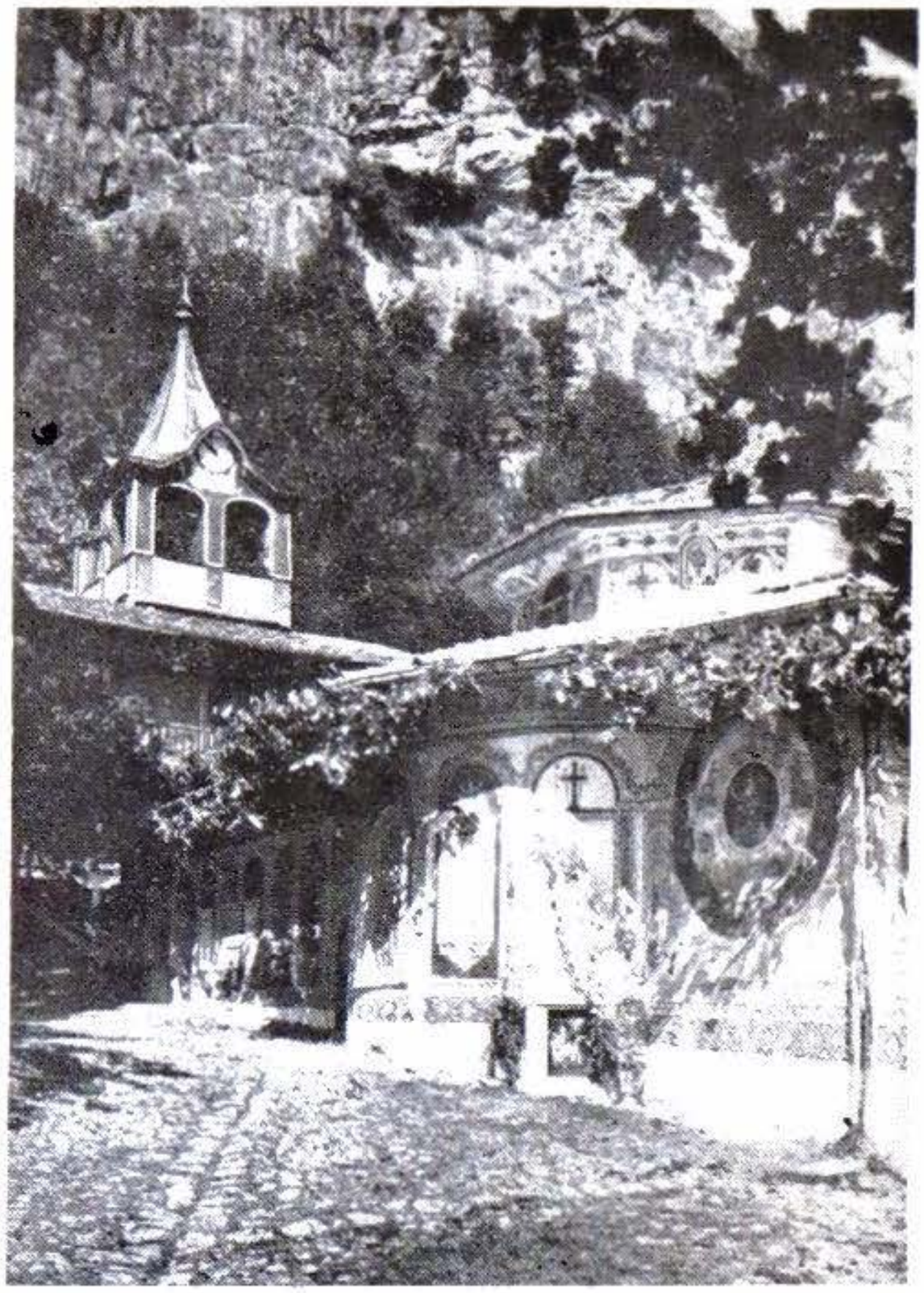
To all this that divine head added that a man who has attained to such a height through diligent exercise in mental prayer and who sees purely what his own attitude was when he came to the grace of Christ, has already seen the resurrection of his soul before the hoped-for general resurrection. So that a soul purified in this way can say with the divine Paul: *whether in the body or out of the body I know not* (II Cor. 12:2). But also it is bewildered and astonished at it, and cries with amazement: *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past tracing out!* (Rom. 11:33). Such were the subjects I was granted to hear from this most divine father.

WE SHALL NOW say a word about St. Gregory's disciples His first disciple was St. Gerasimus. He came from Euripus, as we said above. Afterwards he enjoyed the instructions of the most holy Patriarch Isidore. This new Gerasimus was a reflection of the ancient Gerasimus of the Jordan. Just as he went by the apostolic way and turned the wild desert of Jordan into a populous country and settled it with earthly angels, so this new Gerasimus, filled with Divine grace and being enlightened by God, went round the whole of Greece in an apostolic manner, filling all who were hungry and thirsty there for the Word of God with the sweetest teaching on virtue. He did not omit to found here, like the Jordanian Gerasimus, in this populous desert, many refuges of piety and chastity, teaching the members of these refuges the rules of pure morality and the attainment of man's original perfection. Having toiled in this way and having been granted to see even here the glory prepared for the chosen of God, he departed to the Lord to enjoy this glory no longer merely for a brief moment, but forever.

The Saint's second disciple was Joseph, who was a compatriot of Gerasimus. He had received no high education, but he was rich interiorly with the true wisdom given by the Holy Spirit, like those glorious fishermen who conquered kings and kingdoms.

St. Gregory's third disciple was the wonderful Abba Nicolas, a native of Athens. After experiencing many vicissitudes, the Patriarch

Joseph wanted to make Nicolas a bishop. But out of modesty and humility he escaped to Mt. Athos He was already an old man when he met St. Gregory. But just as a magnet draws steel to itself, so St. Gregory drew to himself all who saw him and heard him speak. Just as during the earthly life of our Redeemer, when St. Andrew saw Him he at once left St. John the Forerunner and followed the sweetest Jesus, so as soon as Nicolas had heard him he at once became his disciple with all the ardour of his soul. Under St. Gregory's wise guidance he soon became skilled in all virtue and surpassed in humility all his brethren and fellow-disciples.



Holy Transfiguration Monastery near Trnovo (Bulgaria), where St. Gregory's teaching was spread by his disciples *(see p. 180)*

Another wonderful disciple was Mark. He became a monk in the Monastery of Isaac in Salonika. After some time he went to Mt. Athos and put himself under St. Gregory. Having acquired mental prayer and soberness, he was, as it were, a treasury and depository of all virtues. In particular he was distinguished for humility and obedience, which he showed not only to the superior but also to all the brethren, and he even served all strangers as a slave. All were amazed at him and praised him and cherished love and affection for him. His holy personality breathed a kind of spiritual fragrance and had a wonderful influence on others so that those who saw him at once felt in their soul a kind of sanctification and attraction to humility such as they saw in Mark, and they took this wonderful Mark as a model of virtue. Even when he had reached profound old age the divine Mark fulfilled his obediences with great joy and fervor. While serving as cook, for example, he never showed weariness or carelessness. That is why God, Who regards the meek and humble of heart, rewarded him with deep peace of soul, and imperturbable quietness of heart, and filled him with unspeakable joy and happiness; in other words, Mark became a most splendid organ of the Holy Spirit, a habitation of the Triune God. Mark's example served for the edification of many. Seeing his labors and

hearing his gracious conversation, many received abundant spiritual profit. Among those who were edified by his angelic life was I. For I lived with him almost till his actual death and enjoyed his sincere friendship. We had as it were one soul in two bodies, and we did not know what was mine and thine. And so whoever called Callistus at once added Mark, and if anyone spoke of Mark he saw in him Callistus too. All the fathers living there in the hermitage looked upon us, upon the unanimity which we had between us by the grace of Christ, as a praiseworthy example, and if out of diabolic envy any of them had a disagreement, they at once reminded themselves of us, and the disagreement vanished.

Our divine father Gregory blessed this unanimity to be between us till our end, and moved by the grace of the Holy Spirit, he added that if we remained in such unity of spirit we should attain to the Kingdom of Heaven. This friendship of ours continued for twenty-eight full years. Before his death Mark was forced by bodily illness to pass from the hermitage to the lavra and to remain there till his death, but our bodily separation never destroyed our spiritual union. Daily going from strength to strength, the blessed Mark reached the highest degree of perfection, so that it is impossible to tell of his virtues. Even what I have told you has been told by me against his will. For out of humility he commanded me not to speak about his virtues. But as praise of the Saints redounds to God, I have considered it right not to be silent about his labors, for the spiritual profit and edification of others.

The blessed Patriarch next tells us about another of St. Gregory's disciples, Jacob. By the instruction and guidance of Gregory he reached such a height of virtue that he was consecrated to the Episcopate and became Bishop of Serbia.

I cannot pass by the wonderful Aaron. He was deprived of bodily sight. Therefore St. Gregory had very great sympathy for him. He explained to Aaron that the blindness of our bodily eyes not only purifies the eyes of our soul but also that the eternal light is given to those who endure it with thankfulness and put their trust undoubtingly in God in all things, and that when by the help and grace of God we purify our hearts by means of fervent and constant prayer then our mind and understanding are enlightened, which are in the soul as two eyes. And when the eyes of our soul are enlightened and opened, then man becomes spiritual in God and sees naturally as Adam saw before his transgression. St. Gregory also explained to him the fall of our first parent and his renewal to his original perfection.

After listening to these instructions, Aaron asked God in deep contrition of heart: "O Lord my God, Who didst raise her who was bent down, Who didst brace the paralytic with one word and didst open the eyes of the blind, raise me too by Thy unutterable compassion and despise not my wretched soul sunk in the mire of sin and let it not sink in the pit of despair; but as Thou art generous open the eyes of my heart, put into it the fear of God and give me to understand Thy commandments and do Thy will."

And this humble prayer of the blind man from the depths of his soul was not in vain. He was heard by God and the eyes of his soul were enlightened so that he no longer had any need of bodily sight. Now he no longer needed anyone to show him the way. More than that, he saw the actions of others even at a great distance from himself. Once he was walking with the Jacob mentioned above to a certain monk. When they were still a long way from the monk's cell, Aaron, enlightened from above, told Jacob: "The monk to whom we are going has in his hands the sacred Gospel and is reading such and such a place in the Gospel." When they came to the monk's cell they found that it was exactly as Aaron had foretold. But this is only a fraction out of much that could be told.

We must at least mention the names of some of the Saint's other disciples: Moses, Longinus, Cornelius, Esaias, Clement. Under St. Gregory's wise guidance they all made great progress in virtue and spiritual vision and, having obtained many disciples themselves, they died peacefully, surrendering their souls into the hand of God.

We must say something of what God granted to Clement. Clement was a native of Bulgaria. He was a shepherd. One night when he was on watch like those shepherds of old, he was granted illumination from above; he saw a kind of wonderful light shining on his irrational sheep and on all the pasture. Clement was filled with joy but at the same time was bewildered by the vision. He felt that this light was perhaps the natural dawn, as just before this he had fallen asleep for a short time on his staff. But while he had these thoughts, before his very eyes this light gradually rose to heaven and left behind it darkness and night. Soon after this Clement went to the Holy Mountain and in the hermitage of Morphima submitted himself to a certain simple but pious and virtuous monk. All Clement's training with this monk consisted in the prayer: Lord have mercy! After a short time Clement was again deemed worthy of the divine light. Clement told his spiritual father about this

vision and asked him for an explanation of it. But as his elder had no experience of spiritual matters he went with him to the divine Gregory. Clement told St. Gregory everything about himself and warmly asked St. Gregory to accept him in his brotherhood. As an imitator of Christ, wishing the salvation of all, the Saint received him with joy and taught him everything that can be of service to our eternal salvation. For Clement's soul which in course of time had become God-seeing, spiritual sights were no longer incomprehensible. He related of himself that as often as he was sent by St. Gregory to the Lavra, during the singing of "More honorable than the Cherubim..." he always saw a bright cloud descend from heaven to the Lavra and cover it in a wonderful way. And when the hymn was finished, he saw the cloud ascend with light to heaven.

Not only did St. Gregory's disciples benefit by his soul-saving instructions but so also did all who came to him. Therefore nearly everyone regarded it as a great misfortune not to be at St. Gregory's and not to be able to hear his teaching. And because his word had unction, it always produced beneficial fruits in the hearts of his hearers. As at the very time of the great Peter's teaching in the house of Cornelius the Holy Spirit descended upon his hearers, so it was with those whom the divine Gregory taught, as those who had experienced this personally told me. For at the very time that St. Gregory was speaking about purity of soul and of how a man becomes a god by grace (they said), there came into our souls a certain divine, irresistible desire and affection for virtue and an inexplicable love for God. St. Gregory induced both solitaries and coenobites [those living a common life in a community] to practise mental prayer and guarding of the mind, in fact everyone.

BUT THE HATER OF GOOD, the devil, could not be indifferent to such labours as those of St. Gregory. He stirred up against the Saint some monks of false learning who, moved by envy, determined to drive him from the Holy Mountain. Out of ignorance some simple men inexperienced in spiritual mysteries also agreed with them. The envious and spiritual boors cried at the divine Gregory: "Do not teach us a way which we do not know," meaning mental prayer and guarding of the mind. Seeing the culmination of envy, the Saint gave place to evil and was silent for a time.

Later, taking with him one of his disciples and a certain disciple Esaias who had suffered much from the Emperor Michael Paleologus for his disagreement with the false Patriarch John Bekkos, he went to the Pro-

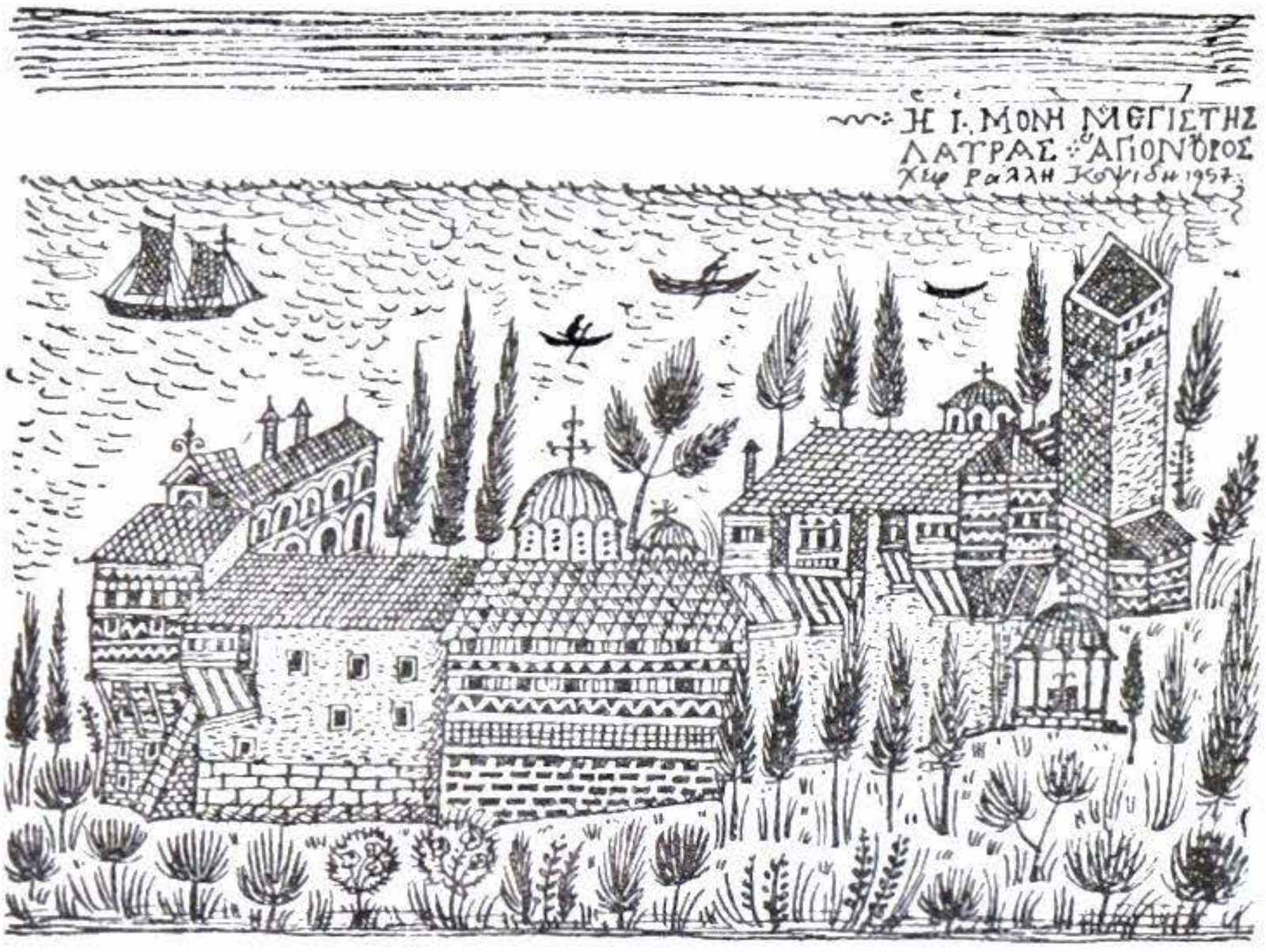
taton [governing body of Mt. Athos] to have his teaching examined. The Protos [President of the governing body] received them kindly and began to rebuke the divine Gregory in a friendly and indirect way, but not for teaching about sobriety and mental prayer (for he was not one of the jealous and boorish clerics) but for teaching without his permission. But knowing St. Gregory's extraordinary labors and the true loftiness of his divine teaching, he left everything alone and was sincerely friendly with him. During his conversation with St. Gregory and Esaias he said: "Today I am talking to the chief Apostles, Peter and Paul."

The fathers who were opposed to St. Gregory, seeing the kind reception given him by the Protaton of the Holy Mountain and hearing the praise of the head of their monastic family, were persuaded of the truth of his teaching. From that time on, all, both hermits and non-hermits, with great joy recognized the divine Gregory and had him as their teacher. But as the number of those who came to him for spiritual profit increased so enormously that he was deprived of his beloved silence, he decided to use cunning in order to rid himself of his visitors. And so he started to change his place of abode, and he changed it frequently. Sometimes he went away to the most distant and impassable deserts. But the burning light could nowhere remain undiscovered; the city set on the hill of the virtues could not be hidden from the sight of those who sought him. Everywhere there came to him those wishing to hear from his mellifluent lips his divine teaching. Therefore in the most deserted places in which he lived, he built cells beside his own for the use of the people who visited him, showing indulgence to their labors and zeal.

THE MOSLEMS who were then ravaging Greece threatened also the Holy Mountain with devastation and enslavement. For one reason, because he had already experienced the iron yoke of these barbarians as we said above, and for another reason, because he did not wish to be deprived of his priceless silence, St. Gregory decided to go again to Sinai, to live in silence on its summit. But learning that neither there would he find the quiet he was seeking, since the impious Saracens were then spreading like lava over all the East, he abandoned his journey to Sinai. He then visited many places trying to find a place suitable for his contemplative life. After staying for some time in Salonica, he went to Mitylene, whence, through Constantinople, he reached Scythopolis. In the neighborhood of Scythopolis he found a place in a certain desert suitable for his life and he had already got established there when he incurred

the persecutions of the envy of the local solitaries, so that his very life was in danger. Not being able to overcome this wicked envy by either his magnanimity or meekness, he returned again through Scythopolis to Constantinople. But as the impious sons of the slave woman had then quieted down a little and were not troubling the Holy Mountain, he went from Constantinople again to Athos. With another of the Saint's disciples, I was his constant fellow traveller on these journeys. During his stay in the desert of Scythopolis he composed the 150 chapters on sobriety, full of activity and theoria [these chapters are in the *Philokalia*].

The Saint was received in the Lavra to which he now went with genuine affection and great joy, and his arrival was regarded as their spiritual triumph. With the blessing of the elder brethren of the Lavra, the Saint built some cells in different places near the Lavra for himself and his disciples and there conversed with God alone. But when, by the permission of God, the Moslems again began to disturb the Holy Mount, being unable to practice silence outside the Lavra the Saint went inside it. But community life was not for him. He thirsted for solitude and theoria. And so, taking one disciple with him, he secretly left the Lavra and went to Adrianople. From there he went to a certain mountain called the "Mountain of Seclusion." Here he found a spot convenient for his life, but almost the whole mountain was full of robbers. Incited by the envious devil who was afraid that the Saint would turn the desert into a habitation of earthly angels, these robbers gave him much trouble. St. Gregory did not despair. He knew that for a naked man robbers of corruptible things are not dangerous. He heard of the pious King Alexander of Bulgaria. Consequently, putting his hope in God Who always assists the good intentions of His servants, the man of God sent his disciples to the King and through them he told him about himself and of his needs and asked him in the name of God for his help and protection from the robbers. The report of the piety of this king did not play St. Gregory false. This wonderful king, who held virtue and the virtuous in such honour, received the Saint's offer with joy and did more than the man of God asked him. For this royal lover of piety erected a whole monastery with all that was necessary for it and arranged everything in a royal manner. And he sent the Saint sufficient money for the maintenance of his group. He also gave several villages and a lake for catching fish for the future upkeep of the brethren; and he sent quantities of cattle and sheep and a large number of work-oxen. (Later, three more lavras sprang up here on the mountain). Here the Saint peacefully finished the remainder of his earthly pilgrimage, continuing to care for the good of the soul of



The Monastery of Lavra. Drawing by Rallis Kopsidis.

each and all. He burned with longing to enrich the whole world with the knowledge of the ascent to the summit of activity and vision, and he longed to kindle in all a burning desire for this ascent. Of him, in a certain sense, one can say these divine words: (His) *sound is gone out into all the earth, and* (his) *words to the ends of the world* (Psalm 18:5). For he scattered his divine teaching not only among the Greeks and Bulgarians, but also among the Serbs and farther -- if not personally, yet at any rate through his disciples. Almost every evil yielded to the power of his word. He turned even those savage rational wolves -- those wild robbers and murderers -- into meek and reasonable sheep, and by making them even here on earth shepherds of irrational sheep he converted them into spotless lambs in the flock of the eternal Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

Such are a few out of many of St. Gregory's labors. Such was the life of this wonderful and blessed soul. But at last the time came even for him to pay the common debt of death. And so this toiler in God, after being slightly and briefly ill, surrendered his blessed soul into the hand of God and ascended to heaven in order to enjoy there Christ Whom he had always desired in the valley of earth, to Whom be glory, honor and adoration with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to the ages of ages. Amen.

ST. GREGORY THE SINAITE

AND THE SPREAD OF HESYCHASM TO THE SLAVS

By Prof. I. M. KONTZEVITCH

THE FOURTEENTH century is the century of the flowering of hesychasm, which embraced the entire Orthodox East and from there spread into Russia. The inspirer of this movement was St. Gregory the Sinaite. Because of the anxieties of that time he left Mt. Athos and settled near the frontier between Byzantium and Bulgaria (in the present Thrace), in the wilderness called Paroria. At first the Saint suffered much from robbers, until the Bulgarian King John-Alexander built for him a monastery and a fortified tower, providing the monastery with everything necessary for its existence. For this royal concern St. Gregory was obliged to his disciple, the Bulgarian *St. Theodosius* of Trnovo († 1362, commemorated Feb. 17), who had been known to the King even before this.

The monastery of St. Gregory did not exist long. Soon after the Saint's death it was destroyed by the Turks. Then St. Theodosius returned to Bulgaria, where King John-Alexander built for him another monastery, called Kalitherovo. St. Theodosius had a vision: he saw "a mountain all filled with various flowers, and wondrous and diverse trees each filled with fruits, and a certain radiant man standing, who was commanded assiduously to gather the fruits." The Saint understood that this indicated the future glory of the place, that "this wilderness will be filled with monks who will bring forth the fruits also of a multitude of virtues," -- which, as his *Life* notes, was soon fulfilled. Professor P. A. Syrkou, speaking of the Bulgarian monasteries as spiritual centers and seedbeds of enlightenment, indicates that in the history of the develop-

ment of the monasteries of Paroria and Kalitherovo there is much that is similar to the history of the development of the Palestinian monastery of St. Sava the Sanctified and, consequently, of the monastery of Mount Sinai, and that "to St. Gregory the Sinaite and his disciple St. Theodosius of Trnovo belongs the honor of having planted in Bulgaria the Rule of Mount Sinai which, judging by the latest researches, is a modification of the Rule of Jerusalem or of St. Sava the Sanctified. Thanks to this Rule, the Bulgarian monasteries received a firm organization from the standpoint of discipline, management, and most important of all, education. Only from such monasteries could there come out such public figures as Patriarch Euthemius of Bulgaria and Metropolitan Gregory Tsamblak, who was raised in the latter's school" ...and, we may add, St. Cyprian, Metropolitan of Kiev -- the immediate personal conductors of hesychasm from Bulgaria into Russia.

Let us look now at the narrative of Patriarch Euthemius, who was then the disciple of St. Theodosius, concerning his elder: "Being the deputy of St. Theodosius at Kalitherovo, Euthemius was constantly in need of the former's guidance. Therefore, at stated times he went to St. Theodosius to receive instructions. Thus, once in the evening at the appointed time Euthemius went to his elder and while still far off gave the agreed signal of his approach, but not hearing the elder's call and after many times repeating the knocking which announced his approach, he hastened to his cell and, considering a bad sign the elder's extraordinary silence even after knocking on the door of his cell, he went to a window, and an extraordinary sight presented itself to him: he saw St. Theodosius, enveloped from head to foot in flame, standing straight and unmoving, as the Prophet Samuel is usually represented, raising his hands on high and with his eyes directed straight to heaven. Euthemius was terrified at this vision and, leaving the elder in peace, rushed to the monastery and immediately began to call the brethren with the bell to the midnight rule of prayer.

"On the following evening he again went to the elder. This time the elder sat before the door of his cell and awaited Euthemius and was weeping. When the latter likewise, falling face down at his feet, began to ask with lamentation why he was weeping, the elder replied that the reason for this was a revelation to him from God in the vision of 'the capture of this land by tyrants [Turks] and the ultimate devastation of this beloved hermitage.' 'Do you, O child, take courage and may your

heart be strengthened,' added St. Theodosius; 'you shall be worthy of the bonds and persecution of the Apostles.'" Thus St. Theodosius was the best example for Euthemius, who saw that his preceptor for his labors and asceticism had become worthy of the gift of clairvoyance.

Contemporary with Euthemius, or perhaps a little later, *St. Cyprian*, later Metropolitan of All Russia († 1406, commemorated Sept. 16), was raised and studied in Trnovo. Prof. P. A. Syrkou is inclined to think that St. Cyprian lived a certain time at Kalitherovo in the monastery of St. Gregory the Sinaite, although there is no proof of this; in all likelihood, he at least became a monk in one of the monasteries of Trnovo.

Metropolitan Cyprian left a great influence on Russian culture. He strove to carry out in Russia the liturgical reform of Philotheus, Patriarch of Constantinople, a noted Palamist. It is probably to the time of Metropolitan Cyprian that there should be ascribed the acceptance of the canonization of St. Gregory Palamas († 1359).

The Church historian Metropolitan Macarius gives the following opinion of St. Cyprian: "'A man of all continence and full of divine reason and most learned.' He strove ceaselessly to teach the people fear of God and by his intelligent, inspired teachings delighted all. Loving silence, he would often go off alone to his country village of Golenishchevo, and there in a quiet refuge between two rivers and surrounded by forest he gave himself over to contemplation and reading the word of God, and copied books with his own hand. He was an expert in church canons, and was a zealot for church services and translated from the Greek several rites and services." Metropolitan Cyprian himself testified of his devotion to the movement of hesychasm in his comments on Patriarch Philotheus: "And I, in my humility, was raised to the high See of the Metropoly of Russia by the most holy and wondrous Philotheus... who labored against the heresy of [the anti-hesychasts] Akindynos and Barlaam, destroying their teaching by his instructions..."

In Serbia, *St. Sava* († 1237) was a hesychast, entirely penetrated by the teaching of the ancient desert Fathers. Later *Archbishop Jacob*, a disciple of St. Gregory the Sinaite, strengthened the spirit of hesychasm in the Serbian Church. King *St. Stephen Dushan* († 1336), a supporter of the hesychasts and founder of Dechani Monastery, tried to persuade St. Gregory Palamas to establish himself in Serbia.

Thus was hesychasm spread to the Slavic lands, chiefly through St. Gregory the Sinaite, who, according to a note in his manuscript *Works*, was "the first teacher to the Bulgarians and Serbs of mental prayer in the tradition and manner of the ancient Fathers."

THE AMERICAN ORTHODOX MISSION

II. ST. NECTARIOS AMERICAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN SEATTLE

By FATHER NEKETAS PALASSIS

In January of 1968 Fr. Neketas Palassis, well known as a conscientious and popular priest for over 8 years in the Seattle Greek parish of St. Demetrios, left the Greek Archdiocese because its hierarchs had ceased to preach Orthodoxy and were leading the faithful into heresy, and formed a missionary parish in Seattle within the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.[1] *By this act Fr. Neketas testified that the time has come for Orthodox Americans to choose, not only between Orthodoxy and heterodoxy, but also between true and false Orthodoxy. A number of priests have followed Fr. Neketas' example in finding refuge within the Russian Church Outside of Russia,*[2] *whose hierarchs stand alone today in steadfastly defending traditional Orthodoxy against the ecumenist heresy; for the realization is spreading that it is only in such a Church, which calls to unchanging Divine Truth and eternal salvation in place of merely human friendship and "dialogue," that the Orthodox Mission has any meaning at all.*

WHILE I WAS IN GREECE in 1966, I learned of the repose in Seattle of Archbishop John of San Francisco. At that time I was perplexed as to why he reposed in Seattle. Only with the establishment of St. Nectarios parish did I realize one of the reasons why our Saviour chose to take Archbishop John from this city. Whenever Archbishop John would celebrate the Divine Liturgy he would place an icon of St. Nectarios on the Holy Table. He especially loved all the newer saints and confessors. It seems that he sensed that a church in St. Nectarios' honor would be established in the very building in which he died."[3]

1. Fr. Neketas set forth the reasons for his action in his farewell sermon to his parish (excerpts printed in *The Orthodox Word*, 1968, no. 1, pp. 37ff).
2. The story of the parish of Sts. Theodore in Buffalo, N.Y., is related in *The Orthodox Word*, 1968, no. 5, pp. 211ff.
3. It is interesting to note further that several months before his repose, Archbishop John brought an icon of St. Nectarios to the Father Herman Brotherhood and suggested that the Saint's Life be printed in *The Orthodox Word*. As the issue (vol. 2, no. 2) containing this Life was being completed, news came of Vladika John's repose in Seattle, and it was presented as a tribute to his memory. And thus it turned out that the first presentation of the *Life of St. Nectarios* to the English-speaking world was bound up with the memory of another saint (to-be) of this century, Archbp. John, and went to all corners of the earth as glorious *Good Tidings* of true living Orthodoxy.

These words of Father Panteleimon, Abbot of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston, during his recent visit to our parish brought to all of us the very special significance of the patronage of St. Nectarios over our parish and of the very special protection and prayers of Archbishop John. He himself encouraged missionary work whenever and wherever possible. Indeed, how very appropriate that our mission parish was founded in the very building and underneath the room where Archbishop John reposed and was taken to Heaven.

Our parish was established in February, 1968, by thirty families who were desirous of maintaining their Orthodox Faith in an "ecumenical" age when the faith is bartered, debated and defiled. Our parishioners come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, although the majority are of Greek ancestry. We have parishioners of Russian, Serbian, Irish, Scottish and English backgrounds, who comprise St. Nectarios parish and who consider their faith the most important thing in their lives.

After much study, prayer and thoughtful discussion our parish chose St. Nectarios as its patron saint, a Saint who has shown forth in this century as a witness to the strength and endurance of the Orthodox Faith.[1] His own experiences of being vilified and falsely accused and attacked serve as an inspiration for us when we find ourselves in similar circumstances.

During our parish's first year of existence we had those who had joined our parish because they "liked" Father Neketas or because they were "angry" at the Greek Archdiocese. These people having never fully understood why they were in our parish have returned from whence they came. Our parish was not meant to be founded on "personalities," but rather on the love of the Orthodox Faith.

In the 1969 World Book Encyclopedia Yearbook it is observed that our parish was established because our members were unable to accept the statements and actions of Patriarch Athenagoras and Archbishop Iakovos in the ecumenical arena. Our faithful, conscious of their obligations to be "guardians of the faith," disassociated themselves from the Greek Archdiocese and sought to find an Orthodox jurisdiction which

1. Several other missionary parishes today have also chosen St. Nectarios as their patron; for example, the Greek Old Calendarist community in Montreal (see *The Orthodox Word*, 1968, no. 1, pp. 28ff), the Swiss Orthodox Mission in Geneva, and the parish now being formed in Toronto which has followed Fr. Neketas' example in leaving the Greek Archdiocese and finding protection within the Russian Church Outside of Russia.

kept and preserved the Orthodox Faith without compromise. Following the example of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston, we turned to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and here we found a hierarchy which was still Orthodox and whose primary concern was maintaining the Orthodox Faith without reference to or concern with ecumenical directions.

We did not plan on becoming "Russians," nor were we expected to become Russified in our liturgical customs. We, like the Holy Transfiguration Monastery, have retained our Greek liturgical customs. However, we have learned much from our Russian brethren in piety, humility and devotion to the faith. Our hierarchs have shown us love, pastoral concern and affection we never have felt in the Greek Archdiocese. The kindness and understanding with which we have been received at St. Nicholas Cathedral by the Very Rev. Andrew Nakonechny, Dean of the Cathedral, have overwhelmed us. He has frequently adjusted his schedules so that we could use the Cathedral for baptisms, marriages and Divine Liturgies. He is a real Father to our parish and our children show their love for him by always asking his blessing whenever they see him. The same feeling is exhibited towards our Bishop Nektary, whom the children see often and whom they respect and love as the "living icon of Christ," for this is the way Orthodox consider their bishops. George Kalfof, director of the Cathedral choir, has often served as our translator and go-between when complex or detailed matters need to be discussed. Without such assistance and mutual respect and understanding our parish could not exist.

Our liturgical music and translations have been provided for us by the Holy Transfiguration Monastery. The translations are made from the original Greek and then set to the traditional Byzantine chant by Father Ephraim of the Monastery. Our parish president, Dr. Andrew Tolas, with the help of Father Ephraim through letters and tape-recordings, is becoming a fine Byzantine chanter. These letters and tapes of Father Ephraim are being shared with other parishioners in order that they too may learn more about the traditional Orthodox music. Where possible the entire congregation participates in the Divine Liturgy and other services by chanting those parts which the chanters do not sing. This has been a great spiritual reward for our members. It is our hope to complete a Divine Liturgy in English set to the traditional Byzantine chant and make it available to those churches who would wish to use it.

Constantine Danilchik, a member of St. Nicholas and St. Nectarios parishes, has kindly allowed us to use St. Panteleimon's House, next door to the church, which he owns. Con's father, Archpriest Michael, had an historic part in the history of the Russian Church in America. A true zealot for Orthodoxy at a time when almost all the American parishes had followed Metropolitan Platon into schism, he founded the Seattle parish in 1932 in order to remain within the canonical jurisdiction of the Russian Church Outside of Russia. When even firm hierarchs were wavering, he gave the fearless example of an uncompromising confessor of Orthodoxy and, while the handful of Synod churches of the time were located in small houses, he built from the ground up a magnificent cathedral (see cover) in memory of Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II and all who died for Faith and Fatherland, in defiance of the overwhelming "leftist" spirit of the day. The holy Archbishop Ioasaph of Canada was a close friend of Fr. Michael. Archbishop John, too, loved and respected Fr. Michael and unfailingly visited him on his trips to America; indeed, only minutes before he reposed on the very spot where originally the Danilchik house stood, he was visiting Fr. Michael's widow. This steadfast Orthodox spirit prepared the fertile ground on which the St. Nectarios parish now witnesses Orthodoxy before the English-speaking world.

The parish Sunday School functions on the second floor of the parish hall and in St. Panteleimon's House. When St. Panteleimon's facilities were not available the teenage class met in Mr. Danilchik's "Econoliner," which proved to be a very suitable location for instruction. We have nearly 30 children in the Sunday School program and they actively participate and enjoy the program even though our space is small and was not designed for instruction. In June we held a week of instruction for the children. They participated in morning prayers, heard Bible stories, Lives of the Saints and made various religious projects. The love of the children for their church and their enthusiastic response is a blessing and joy for us all. Many of the seven-year-olds know the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Trisagion prayers by heart, and still others know the Divine Liturgy by heart. This is because they attend the Divine Liturgy every Sunday with their parents and participate in the Divine Liturgy in a language they know and understand. Our children are not shunted off as undesirables to Sunday School during the Divine Liturgy. This practice is seen in most parishes and the children develop the concept that "Liturgy is for adults and Sunday School for children."

St. Nectarios (1920)

Archbishop John (1966)

On the steps of St. Nicholas Cathedral (l r): Presbytera Helen and Fr. Neketas Palassis, Bishops Sava of Edmonton and Nektary of Seattle, Archpriest Andrew Nakonechny; in back, Mrs. Mitchell Jeffries, Mr. and Mrs. Constantine Danilchik; in front, the Danilchik children Xenia and Paul, and Angelique Palassis.

Father Panteleimon, Abbot of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston, with the children of St. Nectarios Parish on his first visit in 1969

Chapel made in the room where Archbishop John reposed. Archpriest Andrew Nakonechny of the Seattle St. Nicholas Cathedral stands beside the Altar Table; Vladika John's klobuk and panagia are at left

The frequent participation of the faithful in the Life-giving Sacrament of Holy Communion is a key factor in our parish's spiritual strength. Without frequent Holy Communion our parish would find itself in a spiritual crisis. Father Panteleimon reminded our people of the necessity of frequent communion, and our parishioners who heard his words were strengthened in their custom.

Our parish publishes the *St. Nectarios Educational Series* which in one year's time has distributed over 8000 separate items. Items are distributed at a rate of 550 a month and have been sent to nearly all states and to Mexico, Canada, Argentina, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Rhodesia, Australia and New Zealand. More articles in this series are being planned. Ultimately, we look forward to preparation of a St. Nectarios Instruction Series which will cover catechetical instruction.

The parish bulletin, "Orthodox Christian Witness," edited by parishioner Constantine Angelos, Education Editor of *The Seattle Times*, has had a far-reaching effect and circulation. It serves as an effective tool of keeping parishioners and friends informed of the parish's progress and of what is going on in the "ecumenical camp of Orthodoxy."

The Holy Transfiguration Monastery of Boston has been our source of inspiration and moral support. It was said that "Angels are light for monks, and monks are light for men," and so it has been for us. The monks have shed their light upon us and we have really seen and understood Orthodoxy. Father Panteleimon's visit, his prayers on our behalf and the concern and interest in our spiritual and material welfare have been a spiritual boon for us. Several of our parishioners have already made pilgrimages to the monastery, and we look forward to the time when every parishioner will be able to say, "I've been there and prayed with the fathers."

An unsung heroine in the work of our parish has been Presvytera Helen who has by her patience, understanding and love strengthened and encouraged Father Neketas. Her cheery countenance, her faith in our Lord and His Church, and her ability to accept disappointments and setbacks with continued trust in the Lord have been important factors in the maintenance of our parish. Easily, the same could be said of our parish president Dr. Andrew Tolas, who by his frequent attendance at services, his optimistic outlook and his faith in the Lord have encouraged and stimulated all our parishioners.

Were it not for the grace of God and the blessing of St. Nectarios and Archbishop John our parish would not exist. Our people have been

subjected to pressures from families, friends and business associates to leave our parish and return to the Greek Archdiocese and thus apostacize from the Orthodox faith. In these days, leaving the Synod and going over to one of the "official, canonical" jurisdictions would in effect be an apostasy from the Church. For nearly all of our faithful it would be easier (socially and, in some cases, financially) to return to the Greek Archdiocese. May our Lord continue to grant to them courage and spiritual strength to live their Orthodox faith while around them others taunt and deride them.

We have received into our parish through baptism several former Episcopalians. Presently a Roman Catholic couple is being prepared for Holy Baptism. All converts are received into our parish by baptism. Especially in these times of "ecumenism" it is so important to maintain exactness in regards to the sacraments and not allow the over-exessive use of economia (dispensation).

Our parish is growing slowly. Admittance to the parish membership means that one will live a sacramental life in Christ, fast and pray, will observe the Church's regulations and will make a free-will annual pledge to the parish. There are no offering trays passed during services and no "dues" are assessed. All free-will offerings are made as parishioners enter the church.

We feel that as the Synod's position in upholding the integrity of Orthodox doctrine and practices becomes more evident, the apostasy of the other "official jurisdictions" will also become more evident. Then some who have waited will join us. Even if these people are but a handful we will be happy for their sake, for they will have cared enough about their faith to seek out the Church in these last days.

May God strengthen and guide us all.

The St. Nectarios Parish may rightly be called a "missionary parish," not only in itself, but for the English-speaking Orthodox world in general, through its "St. Nectarios Educational Series." Nearly 30 documents of critical importance for Orthodoxy today have already been presented in this series, among them the Open Letters of Metropolitan Philaret (including the recent "Sorrowful Epistle"), the two Open Letters of Holy Transfiguration Monastery to The Logos *in defense of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, an Orthodox evaluation of Apostolos Makrakis, the text of the "Declaration" of the recent Diocesan Congress at Cannes, and many others. They may be ordered free of charge from:*

ST. NECTARIOS AMERICAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
9223 20th Avenue N.E., Seattle, Washington 98115

ARCHBISHOP THEOPHAN OF POLTAVA

1873 - 1943

Commemorated February 19

In connection with the forthcoming 50th anniversary of the canonical establishment of the independence of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, *free of Communist domination, we wish to present brief biographical sketches of the outstanding pillars of this Church. Some of them have attained unquestionable sanctity and shine today against the background of the present age of apostasy as indeed equal to the great Saint-Hierarchs of the truly Ecumenical Orthodox Church of Christ the Saviour. With some of these archpastors the readers of* The Orthodox Word *are already acquainted: Archbp. John Maximovitch (1966, no. 5), Metrop. Anastassy (1965, no. 4), Archbps. Ioasaph (1968, no. 2), Vitaly (1965, no. 3), and now Theophan.*

BORN Basil Dimitrievich Bystrov in 1873, he was the son of a priest of the village of Podmosh in the diocese of St. Petersburg and a pupil of the local religious schools. In 1892, after finishing the course of instruction in the seminary, he entered the St. Petersburg Theological Academy first on the list of examinees. He went from year to year in the Academy as first student. In 1896 he completed the Academy and remained there to teach; in two years he became a hieromonk and in 1901 was raised to the rank of archimandrite and promoted to temporary inspector of the Academy. 1905 he was honored with the degree of Master of Theology for his work, "The Tetragrammaton, or the Divine Name of Jehovah in the Old Testament," and three years later named director of the Academy. That same year in the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra he was consecrated Bishop of Yamburg, the fourth vicar of the St. Petersburg Diocese. On the eve of his consecration as bishop, in his sermon addressed to his consecrator-hierarchs, he testified: "...Ever since I came into being, I observe in myself an unceasing battle of life and death in the realm of existence, both natural and spiritual. O, how heavy this battle has been at times in me; but may there be thanks to the Lord for it! It has deeply implanted in my heart the saving truth that I in myself am nothing, and that the Lord for me is everything."

Vladika Theophan (right) with his disciple
Ioasaph, later Archbishop of Canada

Interiorly he was of a highly spiritual cast of soul and a great man of prayer, for which he became widely known preeminently in the capital society. At one time he became the spiritual advisor to the Imperial Family. Later, he would recall with emotion how he often celebrated the Liturgy at the Court church on weekdays and how the Empress herself and all four Great Princesses sang on the cliros. The Revolution overtook him as Archbishop of Poltava, from whence he emigrated with the White Army through Constantinople to Bulgaria, where he lived many years.

Regarding the height of his spiritual life one may see from the memoirs of H. Y. Kontzevich: "I was told that in his student years he had labored intensely in asceticism, slept on the floor and the like, and

ruined his health; he had tuberculosis and poor digestion. Therefore in his mature years he was an opponent of excessive physical asceticism. His voice always remained very weak. He was of small stature, thin, and there was something special in him that evoked a feeling of reverent awe. Jokes or laughter in his presence were impossible. He was like an unearthly being, a manifestation from the other world. The practical problems of life were foreign to him. He was a very learned man. To govern a diocese and look into worldly affairs were not his calling. It was a great mistake to deprive him of the rectorship of St. Petersburg Academy, where he was in his place. He was a great expert in patrology and patristics. He himself being a practicer of mental prayer and having attained a high stage in this practice, he knew as no one else the teaching of the Holy Fathers concerning this "science of sciences." Archpriest Sergy Chetverikov, who wrote together with Abbot Chariton of Valaam Monastery a book on the Prayer of Jesus,[1] asked to be a disciple of Archbishop Theophan. But he was given a condition by the holy man: break off with the YMCA.[2] This Fr. Sergy would not do.

"My husband went to college in Poltava and knew how the people there revered Vladika Theophan. When he came to serve in the cathedral, the steps of the temple and the whole path by the entrance were strewn with flowers. My aunt, E. A. N., went with her husband to Poltava and after returning related to me the following incident: In Poltava there lived an especially devout couple. They were exceptionally devoted to Vladika. When the husband died, the widow, being in great grief, asked Vladika if he could inform her concerning the lot of her husband beyond the grave. Vladika answered that in a short time he might be able to give her an answer to her question. A certain time passed and Vladika, who had prayed, told the widow that her husband had found mercy with God.

"Another incident was related by Vladimir Davidovich, Prince Zhevakhov, who later became Bishop Ioasaph. He asked Vladika Theophan concerning the lot of the bishop of Belgorod, who had been found hanged in the bathroom of the episcopal residence. Had his soul perished? Vladika Theophan said that this bishop had not perished. He had not hanged himself, but this had been done to him by demons. It

1. Translated as *The Art of Prayer*, Faber & Faber, London, 1966. Reviewed in *The Orthodox Word*, 1967, no. 2, p. 66.

2. A pseudo-Christian organization that, especially in Europe, has worked hard to undermine the traditional Orthodox other-worldly spirituality and replace it with a purely humanitarian world-view. See *The Orthodox Word*, 1969, no. 4, pp. 146, 148.

turned out that this house had been rebuilt, and earlier there had been a house church there. But the builders had blasphemously made a bathroom where previously there had been the sanctuary and had stood the altar. When consecrated places are defiled, or where murder or suicide have been performed, and the grace of God has left the place, there demons settle in. Whether or not this bishop had been to blame in this blasphemous act, he turned out to be a victim of it.

"When Vladika lived in seclusion in Clamart, near Paris, I had the honor of sometimes being present when he served the Divine Liturgy, and afterwards of sharing his *trapeza* at his table, when he would have talks on spiritual life, illustrating them by living examples of holy ascetics. With difficulty, being already then a little deaf, I devoured with strained attention his priceless narratives, as if coming from the other world. Later, when I was informed of his death, an unexplainable torrent of bitterness seized me; I wept, knowing that a real saint had left this earth, leaving spiritual emptiness behind him and making this world gray and dull. At that time I had a terrible and unceasing toothache which gave me no peace. In agony, a flash of hope enlightened me: I turned mentally to Vladika as if he were alive right here and could hear me, and I prayed to him for help. Instantly the pain stopped! Although I never doubted his sanctity, this miraculous intercession was to me a clear sign of his being indeed a saint of God!"

Not without interest are his words concerning the future of much-suffering Russia, written in a letter to the same person in 1925:

You ask me about the near future and about the last times. I do not speak on my own, but give the revelation of the startsi. And they have handed down to me the following: The coming of Antichrist draws nigh and is very near. The time separating us from him should be counted a matter of years, and at most a matter of some decades. But before the coming of Antichrist Russia must yet be restored, to be sure, for a short time. And in Russia there must be a Tsar, forechosen by the Lord Himself. He will be a man of burning faith, great mind and iron will. This much has been revealed about him. We shall await the fulfillment of what has been revealed. Judging by many signs, it is drawing nigh, unless because of our sins the Lord God shall revoke, shall alter what has been promised. According to the witness of the Word of God, this also happens.

Memorable also was the moment when Archbishop Theophan met with a group of clergy of the "living church" trend and some liberal professors at the Moscow All-Russian Council in 1917-1918. Between adherents of the Church order of Holy Russia and modernist clerics the

dispute never died out during the whole time of work on the Council as to whether one should conduct church life by the old course or make concessions to the spirit of the times and modernize church life. And here the modernists politely, respectfully came to Archbishop Theophan; apparently even they felt in him a spiritual giant of Orthodoxy... "We respect you, Vladika, we know your church wisdom... But the waves of the times flow swiftly, changing everything, changing us; one must give in to them. You, too, must give in, Vladika, to the raging waves... Otherwise with whom will you be left? You will be left alone." "With whom will I be left?" Vladika meekly answered them. "I will be with St. Vladimir the enlightener of Russia. With Sts. Anthony and Theodosius the Wonderworkers of Kiev-Caves Monastery, with the holy Hierarchs and Wonderworkers of Moscow. With Sts. Sergius and Seraphim and with all the holy martyrs, God-pleasing monks and wonderworkers who have gloriously shone forth on Russian soil. But you, dear brothers, with whom will you be left if even with your great numbers you give over to the will of the waves of the times? They have already carried you to the flabbiness of Kerensky, and soon they will carry you under the yoke of the brutal Lenin, into the claws of the red beast." The church modernists left Vladika in silence after his reply.(Maharoblidze.)

The last years of his secluded life he spent in France; he went into retirement and lived as a hermit in the country in certain caves. Concerning the conditions of the last years of the life of Archbishop Theophan, the "Hierarch-Cavedweller," Fr. Theodore I. relates:

"Vladika died in the years of the German occupation, in the village of Amboise in France. Here we visited his modest grave in the small Catholic village cemetery, on a hill. The nearest settlement to the cemetery, with an old Catholic church, is half a mile. How quiet it was at the cemetery! There was an Orthodox cross, name, dates. We served a panikhida with two old women, his servants-novices, perhaps nuns in secret tonsure. We went home quietly. The road was about two or three miles to the place where, in chalk caves in the hills, the hierarch lived.

"There were three rather long, high, well-carved-out caves. Perhaps this reminded him of the life of St. Paul of Thebes and St. Anthony the Great. In one was the former cell of Vladika, which was also his house church. In another lived twelve fierce dogs -- doberman-pincers, capable of tearing a man apart in a minute. During the day they were chained. In the third cave lived goats, geese, and ducks, which comprised the whole of Vladika's farm. In a fourth cave was the storehouse, where

on the floor we saw a sack of walnuts, furniture piled high, beds, tables, *etc.*; there we lodged for the night. In the garden there was a well and some fruit trees, and on the hill a vineyard. There was home-made strong and aromatic wine, and well-churned butter, milk, cheese, *etc.*, which were for sale.

"In Vladika's cell we saw two of his photographic portraits; a Bible with dry flowers inserted, gathered at St. Seraphim's canal at Diveyevo, and other sacred things put in; a case with relics, perhaps as many as 24, in little gold vessels; and much else of sacred relics..." Such was the atmosphere of his last earthly dwelling place.

After his holy repose, exactly on the 40th day, the righteous Vladika appeared to his grieving spiritual son, Ioasaph, later Archbishop of Canada, concerning which this marvellous ascetic-enlightener of Canada[1] related the following, which is a testimony of Vladika Theophan's sanctity:

"After the death of my marvellous preceptor, I grieved terribly... It was very difficult for me, and I prayed much for him... And then, on the night of the 40th day after his repose, I dreamed I was standing before a magnificent church, from which after the service a multitude of hierarchs came out. I recognized the great hierarchs -- Sts. Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian and many others; suddenly in their midst I saw -- Vladika Theophan! I ran up to him: 'Vladika, where do you come from?' 'Well, as you see, we have just served Liturgy together. Come with us.' I went. All took places in a spacious automobile, or perhaps boat, which began as it were to sail in the air. Past us went hills, forests, valleys of indescribable beauty, wondrous churches and monasteries. My Abba began to point out these abodes to me and revealed their fates: 'This one here will be saved, but that one, there below in the valley, will perish.'-- It was terrible to behold! And all around us were beautiful gardens, and a wondrous fragrance. I looked with delight, without seeing enough... For a long time we were carried thus in the air, in the midst of this magnificence. Finally I could not contain myself and asked: 'But where are we?' Vladika Theophan answered me: 'And why is it you don't understand -- in paradise!' From that moment I was reassured, having understood that my dear preceptor had been found worthy of eternal blessedness."

May the Lord grant to us also, by the prayers of the righteous Vladika Theophan, to be worthy of mercy with God. Amen.

1. See *The Orthodox Word*, 1968, no. 2, pp. 88ff.

Orthodoxy in the Contemporary World

A DEFENCE OF ORTHODOXY IN WESTERN EUROPE

THE DECADE of the sixties of this century, witness to so many grievous departures from Holy Orthodoxy, and even outright apostasy, has seen also the rallying together of the true defenders of the undefiled Orthodox Faith. As champions of this latter movement, world Orthodoxy looks increasingly to the bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, whose unanimity in upholding traditional Orthodoxy is as notable as the universally "ecumenist" tone of the other Orthodox hierarchies (with the notable exception of the Greek Old Calendarists, whose battle for existence in the face of an ugly persecution by the State and official Church of Greece gives them no opportunity to exert influence abroad). The many Open Letters of Metropolitan Philaret, the latest of them a "Sorrowful Epistle"[1] addressed to all Orthodox bishops, protesting the melting away of Orthodox steadfastness in witnessing the truth before an "ecumenist" world, are by now well known to English-speaking Orthodox; *The Orthodox Word* has printed, in addition, outspoken articles by Archbishop Averky of Holy Trinity Monastery[2] and Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal.[3] Recently the Western European Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, in a "Declaration" adopted at the Ninth Congress of this Diocese (Cannes, France, May 4-6 of this year) and signed by Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, Bishop Jacob of the Hague, and numerous clergy and faithful, has announced its firm resolve not to depart from the saving doctrine of Holy Orthodoxy into the morass of ecumenist confusions. A few excerpts from this Declaration will show its uncompromising Orthodox character.[4]

"Outside the Church there is no *Truth*. There is One Head. There is a single Body... That is why there cannot be two, three, or more Churches simultaneously *One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic*, and why we cannot speak of any Union of 'the Churches,' thereby ascribing the title of Church to heterodox communities... Anyone who does not live

1. English translations of this and other Open Letters of Metropolitan Philaret are contained in the "St. Nectarios Educational Series" (see p. 190).
2. *The Orthodox Word*, 1967, no. 5-6, pp. 182ff.
3. *Ibid.*, 1969, no. 4, pp. 145ff.
4. A complete English text is in the "St. Nectarios Educational Series" (see p. 190).

in the Church and who does not accept Her as the ground of Truth and the place of Revelation, cannot be called a Christian in the full sense of the term...

"It is not by disguising our differences that we shall achieve unity. It would be preferable to clear up misapprehensions with words which, while unpleasant to hear, are sincere and charitable, and not to be found giving a serpent when we are asked for a fish (Matt. 7:10, Lk. 11:11). It is categorically imperative for us to confess, openly and firmly, the *Truth* kept by our Church, and that not only with words but also in our lives... These divisions which the 'separated brethren' claim are purely human and futile disputes, easily overcome with a fraternal kiss and by letting bygones be bygones, are in reality among the chief problems of witnessing to the *Truth*. Those who wish to fill up the gap that separates us from our heterodox brethren with friendly feelings, only dig it all the deeper by their indifference to the *Truth* which is Christ. Can we say that dogmas, which form the very basis of our salvation, have only a relative importance? Whoever sets himself against dogmas sets himself against the *Truth*, against Christ. The Church has always had well-marked frontiers and alert guards: the Fathers of the Church. Whoever wishes to rejoin the Church must confess Her Orthodoxy, after having been freed from everything unorthodox.... Loss of belief in the Orthodox Church has become the principal danger for Christians today.

"....It is high time to speak out frankly and honestly, to call things by their real names, lest we lead people astray and give rise to impossible dreams...."

The steadfast Orthodoxy of this document leaves no doubt as to the position of the Western European Diocese, in harmony with the entire Russian Church Outside of Russia, in the face of the ecumenist fantasies and deceptions of the day. The reports of this Congress reveal also another fact, one that has become the logical consequence of placing Orthodoxy before nationality and every other worldly consideration: the increasing role of converts, from many countries, in the mission of the Russian Church Outside of Russia. The account in *Orthodox Russia* (1969, no. 10, pp. 9-10) informs us:

"Shortly after the opening of the Congress all became acquainted with each other, and there was formed a single harmonious family, even though it was composed, besides Russians, of French, Swiss, Spaniards, Greeks, Yugoslavs, Dutch, and others."

Clergy and lay delegates to the Diocesan Congress at Cannes.
In front are the two hierarchs, Archbishop Anthony (left) and Bishop Jacob.

"It must be said that the non-Russian priests struck all by their extraordinary steadfastness in the Orthodox Faith, confessing it sincerely and from the heart. Through what trials they have come, seeking the Truth! And only in coming to Orthodoxy did they become deeply convinced that Truth is only in Orthodoxy. These people, with deep faith and extraordinary devotion to Orthodoxy, are the sowers of our faith in many foreign lands. In the Roman Catholic camp confusion and disorders are occurring, and many have begun to appeal to the Orthodox clergy, seeking spiritual support from them. Seeing the steadfastness and correctness of Orthodoxy, they enter deeply into it, finding there that which they had lost in the Catholic church."

"The Vespers were served by Bishop Jacob with his priests,[1] who served and sang in the Dutch language to the regular Russian melodies... In general Bishop Jacob left a deep impression. And all the priests of the French Orthodox Church who were present at the Congress made and left a very good impression. In all their talks and private conversations could be seen their conviction of the rightness of the Orthodox Faith."

1. On the Netherlands Orthodox Church see *The Orthodox Word*, 1968, no. 2, pp. 72ff.

The "international" character of the Congress was emphasized by the fact that all talks were immediately translated from French into Russian (and vice versa) through the use of microphones.

Thus, on a small scale (in addition to the two hierarchs, there were present 15 priests and two deacons, besides the lay delegates), this Diocesan Congress reflected what is happening in general today within the Russian Church Outside of Russia, whose existence and nature have become a sign to Orthodox faithful the world over. The publication of the "Declaration" of this Congress immediately in Russian, French, Greek, and English is another sign of the relevance and message of the Russian Church Outside of Russia to world Orthodoxy today.

THE CANONIZATION OF THE SAINTS OF GOD

(*Continued from page 161*)

burning began to grow faint; there was no longer that clear sense of what Divine righteousness is. And so the general consciousness of the faithful could not always distinguish who was a righteous man and pleasing to God. In some places there appeared dubious persons who by false ascetic exploits attracted a part of the flock. For this reason the Church authority began to keep watch over the veneration of saints, showing concern to guard the flocks from superstition. The life of ascetics revered by the faithful began to be investigated, and the accounts of their miracles to be verified. Towards the time of the baptism of Russia it had already been established that the acknowledgement of a new saint was to be performed by the Church authority. The decree of the Church authority, of course, was disseminated to the region within its jurisdiction; but other places, too, usually acknowledged a canonization performed anywhere else, even though they did not enter it into their own calendars. After all, the Church authority only testified of sanctity. *Righteous men became saints not by the decree of the earthly Church authority, but by the mercy and grace of God.* By the Church authority was only approved the praising in church and the invocation in prayer of a new saint.

Which authority should and could do this was not precisely determined; in any case it was an episcopal authority.

There have been canonizations performed by the higher Church authority of an entire Local Church, and the names of the newly canonized were then entered into the Church calendar of that entire Church; others were canonized in one or another locality and their veneration

gradually spread to other places. Ordinarily the canonization was performed in the place where the righteous one lived or suffered. But it also happened otherwise. Thus, the youth George from the city of Kratov (Serbia), who suffered at the hands of the Turks in Sofia (Sredets) (Bulgaria) in 1515, was canonized already within fourteen years in Novgorod. Notwithstanding the fact that his fellow-countrymen also revered him as a new martyr, and that a Church service to him was even compiled by his spiritual father, they did not dare to show this openly, fearing the Turks; and therefore in Novgorod, which had trading connections with these places, by order of the Archbishop a service was compiled and the memory of the martyr George the New began to be revered, and from there it was spread to all Russia. When later Serbia and Bulgaria were freed from slavery to the Turks, they began to use the Service compiled in Russia, and the Service compiled originally in Sofia remains to this day on a library shelf.

In the last two centuries, when Russia lived in glory and prosperity, the canonization of new saints was usually performed quite solemnly by the decree of the Higher Authority, sometimes (but not always) taking place throughout the whole of Russia, and especially in the place where the wonderworking relics were obtained. However, this does not alter the general order in the Church, and if the Russian people under the yoke of the godless power today cannot openly praise and invoke a Saint *of God, glorified by God*, it is the duty of the part of the Russian Church that is free from the yoke of the godless to universally revere and invoke a Wonderworker who is like to St. Nicholas, revered now in the whole world, and to pray to St. John the Righteous one [of Kronstadt] for the correction of our life and the cessation of the calamities which, in accordance with his prophecy, have befallen our Fatherland.

May the Lord grant that that longed-for day come, when from the Carpathians to the Pacific Ocean will thunder out:

"We magnify thee, O righteous Father John, and we venerate thy holy memory, for thou dost pray for us to Christ our God!"

Editors' note: This sermon was occasioned by the canonization in 1964, by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, of the Righteous Father John of Kronstadt, one of the greatest wonderworkers in the history of the Orthodox Church, and the public refusal of the American "Metropolia" to accept it, supposedly on the grounds that it could only be performed by the whole Russian Church in Russia itself.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

(*Act of October 23, 1962; Section 4369, Title 39, United States Code*)

1 Date of filing *October 11, 1969*

2 Title of publication *The Orthodox Word*

3 Frequency of issue *Bimonthly*

4 Location of known office of publication *Platina, California 96076*

5 Location of the headquarters or general business offices of the publishers
Same as above

6 Names and addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor
Publisher *Orthodox Christian Books & Icons, Platina, Calif. 96076*
Editors *Eugene Rose and Gleb Podmoshensky, both of Platina, Calif. 96076*
Managing Editor *Eugene Rose, address same as above*

7 Owner *Orthodox Christian Books & Icons, Platina, Calif. 96076*
(*Eugene Rose and Gleb Podmoshensky, address same as above*)

8 Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities *None*

9 For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates *Not applicable*

10 Extent and nature of circulation

		Avg. no. each issue last 12 mos.	Actual no. last issue (July-Aug.)
A	Total no. copies printed (*Net Press Run*)	1825	1860
B	Paid circulation		
	Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	72	4
	Mail subscriptions	1127	1212
C	Total paid circulation	1199	1216
D	Free distribution (including samples) by mail, carrier or other means	69	59
E	Total distribution (sum of C and D)	1268	1275
F	Office use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	557	585
G	Total (sum of E and F)	1825	1860

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. *Eugene Rose*